

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Clark Fork Basin Water Management Task Force

FROM: Matthew McKinney, Executive Director
Gerald Mueller, Project Coordinator
Mark Lambert, Project Associate

SUBJECT: Summary of November 25, 2002 Meeting

DATE: November 22, 2005

Participants

The following members of the Task Force were present:

Bill Kleinhans, Flathead Basin above Flathead Lake
Marc Spratt, Flathead Basin above Flathead Lake
Steve Fry, Hydropower
Holly Franz, Hydropower
Phil Tourangeau, Tribes
Commissioner Gail Patton, Local Government
Jay Stucky, Clark Fork River Watershed below Flathead River Confluence
Elna Darrow, Flathead Lake
Harvey Hackett, Bitterroot River Watershed
Land Lindberg, Blackfoot River Watershed

The following were not present:

Matt Clifford, Conservation and Environment
Bill Slack, Flathead River Watershed below Flathead Lake to the confluence
with the Clark Fork River
Eugene Manley, local government in Granite County
Jim Dinsmore, the Upper Clark Fork River Watershed
Tracy Turek, the city of Missoula

Meeting Goals

- Introduction to basin regulatory controls
- Continue discussion of basin water uses
- Continue discussion of Task Force's three objectives

Discussion of Meeting Summaries and Draft Table of Contents

Hard copies of each presentation were handed out to the Task Force. Meeting summaries will include a summary of Task Force discussion and points of action, with short presentation summaries of salient points.

A Draft Management Plan Table of Contents was discussed. The Task Force made the following comments regarding the Table of Contents:

- In the Introduction section, define water management in theoretical terms and in terms of the specific Clark Fork plan
- Cover inter-basin interactions and effects among subbasins
- Include discussion of vegetation management as a from of watershed management (refer to Colorado effort)
- Allow a section with individual Task Force member input
- Include the strengths and weaknesses of basin water yield estimates
- Quantify ground water storage and safe yield
- Quantify basin water uses

Presentations

1. Rich Moy, DNRC – Regulatory Constraints to Water Use in the Clark Fork River Basin

Mr. Moy covered the regulatory constrains to water use and development by subbasin within the Clark Fork River Basin.

2. Rich Moy, DNRC -- MSU Clark Fork Basin Model, Implications for Future Development

3. Mike McLane, DNRC -- Water Use in the Clark Fork Basin

Mr. McLane presented data on all types of water use broken down by basin and subbasin; showing how much water is actually being used as opposed to the amount of water allocated for use. While the last comprehensive data comes from 1980, the Task Force should be able to work with these statistics. However, the average annual numbers are not very representative of what is happening in the basin because of measurement methods that include water used for hydropower as a “consumed” resource. Points of discussion during Mr. McLane’s presentation included:

- Additional storage capacity in existing reservoirs and the option of building more dams for water storage
- Storage in the ground through irrigation—but there can be no water right permitted for that use
- Future storage systems in Montana will likely include the use of confined aquifers

Roundtable Discussion

What are the implications of the information we have heard the past four meetings in terms of the three objectives outlined in HB 397?

1. Options to protect security of water rights

- Plan needs to manage for the future, not alter rights of the past
- Avista’s water rights should be protected with equal credence as other water rights in the basin clout

2. Orderly development of water

- Task Force must address the state's continuous permitting of additional water rights and work within that system. So far, politics has precluded any discontinuance of water rights permits, even within an over-allocated basin.
- Task Force must define greatest and best use of water, i.e. set use priorities, then form the management plan around that definition
- Vegetation management
- Ground water recharge

3. Water conservation

- Possibility of addressing water quality in the management plan

What additional information would be helpful in addressing these issues?

- Potential storage capacity for existing reservoirs
- Groundwater recharge information
- Information on vegetation control to affect water yield (check with UM Forestry School & USFS)
- Discussion of option of using wells to maintain base flow
- MPED permits and water flows

Next Steps

Each Task Force member received a Homework Assignment to be completed and returned by December 20th to Matt McKinney (mmckinney@state.mt.us or fax at 406-444-4418). Information from the Homework Assignment will be synthesized prior to the next meeting. Please contact Mark Lambert (lambert@crmw.org or 406-243-7719) if additional copies of the Homework Assignment are needed.

No December meeting will be held. The January 6 meeting will focus on the following topics:

1. The Task Force's shared visions as determined from the Homework Assignment
2. Management practices underway in each of the subbasins within the Clark fork River Basin, as determined by the Homework Assignment